

Brand Marketing Strategy Analysis of the Tea Beverage Industry

--Taking Mixue Ice Cream & Tea as an Example

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Abstract: Under the new consumer era, the traditional marketing strategy of product communication is gradually weakening, and the importance of product branding is becoming increasingly prominent, becoming an essential part of the competitiveness of enterprises. The majority of tea beverage brands make brands deeply remembered by consumers to get a place in the fierce competition in the market. This paper takes Mixue Ice Cream & Tea (also named Mixue) as an example and elucidates the brand optimization strategies from perspectives such as brand IP image design, festival marketing, and music marketing combined with new media. The study provides inspiration and references for tea products.

Keywords: IP, new media, brand, marketing strategy

1. Introduction

The tea beverage industry begins in 2010. With the rapid growth of the tea market and the capital market's pursuit of new-style tea drinks, various tea beverage brands have sprung up. These tea beverage brands have pushed the development of new-style tea beverages to a new stage of explosive growth, and the tea beverage market has been further expanded and the industrial scale has been further increased while also intensifying the competition in the tea beverage industry [1].

The pursuit of every tea beverage brand is to build a quality brand and leave an impression in the mind of consumers [1]. Mixue, which was only born in 2006, is undoubtedly a successful example of making a deep impression on consumers. Based on this, the research questions of the study are the following: As a newcomer, how did Mixue manage to make a deep impression in the minds of the public in such a short period? And what inspiration can similar tea beverage brands get from it?

2. The Brand Shaping of Mixue

2.1. The Emotional IP Images

Mixue means the combination of fresh ice cream and tea. Because of its affordable prices and outstanding quality, as well as its IP operation, the brand has become very successful in China. Its IP image is a Snow King with a red cape, scepter, and crown, which enhances its recognition. In terms of emotional perception, the Snow King is animated and cute, creating a life-like persona and showing

the ordinary dreams of small people, while also echoing Mixue 's mission to deliver happiness and share sweetness, thus making everyone around the world enjoy high-quality and affordable deliciousness [2]. At the same time, Snow King can be seen on every product of Mixue, which makes a deeper impression on consumers while purchasing.

Besides, the staff dressed as Snow King dolls to attract customers at the entrance of the stores. And the staff looks lively, and cute according to the role of the Snow King. Funny performances often make passers-by stop, leaving a preconception of a positive, sunny, and cheerful character.

In addition, the image of the Snow King has its popularity and is closer to the users than the celebrities, which is less likely to create a gap between consumers and the brand. Mixue chose a malleable and stable IP image to avoid damage to the brand's image due to celebrities' public opinion and the trust crisis as well as to meet consumers' sterile aesthetic in a long-term and sustainable manner. Not only does it reduce the cost of cooperation and publicity for celebrity endorsement and greatly reduce the cost of communication, but it also brings the function of communication. Therefore, Mixue makes full use of cultural identity to create a value effect and enhance user stickiness [2].

2.2. Use of New Media for Music Marketing

With the development of new media, advertising competition among major brands has become more and more fierce. short video platforms have been favored by many advertisers as a fast channel for commercial realization. With music as a useful tool to enhance the attractiveness of videos, many brands have achieved breaking the circle with their advertising music on the short video platform. Mixue's theme song is You love me, I love you, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea, sweet honey which has gained hundreds of millions of views, with its TikTok topic reaching a peak of 5.5 billion plays [3].

Mixue's theme song features simple lyrics and melody. It is adapted from a popular American country ballad. The song itself is historically tested and easily accepted by the public. The lyrics are symmetrical and catchy although they are in a brainwashing style, the lyrics fit the brand, and the content of the ad is closely related to the brand, highlighting the sweetness of the product and the "me and you" brand concept. The song has a lot of "sweetness" and "me and you". A lot of "you" and "me" words appear in the song to create an interactive atmosphere. When there are a lot of personal words like "I" and "you" in the song, it can create a sense of interaction between the creator and the audience [3].

At the same time, Mixue has also put a lot of effort into the dissemination of the song. Compared with other brands' "online to offline" approach, Mixue chose the promotion method of offline to online. In the beginning, Mixue repeatedly played the theme song in a large number of offline stores to reinforce the brainwashing effect and lay the foundation for the widespread dissemination online. It has a strong audio-visual impact, and the short video music of fewer than two minutes fully meets the characteristics of fragmented information dissemination, which is conducive to efficient dissemination on the Internet [4]. Therefore, in the information-explosive Internet, the lyrics and melody of Mixue can reach the audience directly and leave a deep impression on users [5]. Consumers who are interested in Mixue will hear magic a theme song again when they arrive at the store. So far, online and offline communication forms a closed loop.

2.3. Mobilizing Netizen for Secondary Creation and Increasing Mass Participation

It is difficult for a single video to achieve large-scale dissemination across the network. The secondary creation from the network can form a powerful output on a large scale and finally complete the fission-type dissemination. So whether the desire to mobilize the majority of netizens for secondary creation is the core and key to its detonation across the network. After the theme song "Mixue Ice Cream & Tea Sweet Honey" was fermented on a small scale on the Internet platform, its official

account uploaded multiple versions of the theme song on Bilibili (a cultural community and video site with a high concentration of Chinese young generations) and TikTok in both English and Chinese and called for a dance challenge for netizens. Obviously, the different versions of the theme song provided rich materials for secondary creations by netizens, and also mobilized their enthusiasm for secondary creations, and subsequently, videos such as "Mixue Ice Cream & Tea 14 Country Singing" and "Underworld Mixue Ice Cream & Tea" were uploaded on TikTok and other secondary creation videos went viral within a short period on the Internet platform. The activity that you can get free products by singing the theme song on-site at the store has set off the brand's communication boom; the topic of "Mixue Ice Cream & Tea Theme Song Live" topped the TikTok Hot 100, and more netizens participated in the creation of the video for the event, making the theme song a new high [4].

Meanwhile, Snow King, as the Chief Quality Control Officer of Mixue and the brand's lifelong spokesperson, also actively interacts with users on Bilibili, official Weibo, and other social short video platforms to share business stories. Of course, this participatory atmosphere is not limited to the interactive level, as Mixue also drives the co-creation of public copyright theme songs across the network. In this activity, by emphasizing the dominance of consumers, their sense of ownership is enhanced, their sense of self-identity and participation is enhanced, and consumers become free theme song "publicity ambassadors", quietly achieving themselves in the process of promoting fan content [2]. In the context of the new media era, Mixue should grasp the opportunities of the times, actively interact with consumers, and establish a good long-term relationship on the basis of constantly pushing out new products and maintaining good quality control, so as to better adapt to the business environment in the Internet era and lay a solid foundation for the successful development of the brand [7].

2.4. Emotional Marketing Plus Holiday Marketing

For Valentine's Day 2022, Mixue launched the "Get a Couple's Certificate" campaign. Participation in the event is simple: customers can purchase two drinks and receive a couple's certificate from Mixue. Mixue is the first to offer an electronic couple's certificate, which can be obtained online by adding a photo of both parties. So many fans are on the social media platform to show their idol and the "couple's certificate", for the brand to bring more heat. The cost of a couple's certificate is less than 2 yuan, which can make customers send friends and tweets, and then play a greater value. The reason why Mixue chose Valentine's Day for the campaign is that Valentine's Day provides the two key words in Mixue's slogan "You love me, I love you, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea is sweet". "Love" and "sweetness" are the two keywords in the slogan "You love me; I love you; Mixue Ice Cream & Tea is sweet". The campaign "Get a couple's certificate on Valentine's Day" deepens the connection between the keywords "love" and "sweetness" and the Mixue Ice Cream & Tea brand. When people think of the words "love" and "sweetness", they will think of Mixue, and when they think of Mixue, they will think of "love" and "sweetness". Mixue has successfully associated the words "love" and "sweetness" with its own brand.

2.5. Give Back to Society and Help Public Welfare

Mixue's popular brand image is inextricably linked to its return to the community and its contribution to the development of public welfare. When heavy rains hit Henan, China, Mixue donated 22 million RMB for flood relief and post-disaster reconstruction, which was unanimously praised by netizens. In addition, it cleverly converts the image of the Snow King to hold a flower and wear a doctor's hat to wish students a golden ranking in public welfare undertakings such as helping the poor and teaching, loving examinations, etc. The event has cumulatively distributed more than 10,000 cups of drinks to college entrance examination candidates, parents, and on-duty staff provided more than 100 college entrance examination service vehicles, and helped millions of candidates take the college entrance

examination with peace of mind. On the one hand, it forms a "Matthew effect" in front of the public and establishes a good social image; on the other hand, it generates a huge advertising effect and creates a new business model [2].

3. Inspiration for Similar Brands

3.1. Establish an IP That Suits Your Brand Image

The Mixue brand can be deeply remembered by consumers, and the "Snow King" IP image is a credit to it. But the two-dimensional IP image is not applicable to all tea beverage brands. If tea beverage brands want to be remembered by consumers through their IP image, you need to tap into their own brand image to establish an IP suitable for their own brand image. At the same time, not all tea beverage brands are ideal for the establishment of an IP image, not because of blindly following the trend and shaping the IP image.

In addition, the IP image cannot remain unchanged, which will cause aesthetic fatigue among consumers. The IP image needs to be continuously innovated so as to make the brand fresher and more adaptable.

3.2. Using New Media for Music Marketing

The theme song of Mixue has been questioned by some as lacking in aesthetics and innovation, despite the amazing effect it has had on communication and is considered to have picked up the "brainwashing effect." However, the brand positioning of Mixue itself is low-end, simple, and popular, so this kind of popular brainwashing song can precisely resonate with the target consumers, which not only can avoid the situation of high and low but also fits with the brand positioning[3]. Therefore, in order to win the audience's favor and optimize the brand image, the song and music video need to fit with the brand's positioning.

At the same time, Mixue's theme song has only one line, but it contains Mixue's unique memory points of "love" and "sweetness". Therefore, if other tea beverage brands want to follow Mixue's example and create a brainwashing commercial song, the lyrics should not only be easy to remember but also include the efficacy of the product or the unique sparkle of the product.

3.3. Strict Control of Product Quality

No matter what brand, good quality is always the priority. Without the support of high-quality products, good marketing can only attract consumers to buy once, and one-time transactions often only make the brand fleeting [6]. If the quality of the product does not keep up with the speed of its popularity, we as consumers will not easily accept it. And in the heat of the upsurge, the number of sales surged, but Mixue still strictly controlled the quality of the product to bring consumers the best experience. Therefore, other tea beverage brands that focus on entertainment marketing focus on their image publicity at the same time but also strictly control the quality of the product so that the new media era can achieve a long rainbow of word of mouth, the development of a long time.

3.4. Combine the Brand's Conditions for Marketing

Most people see the buzz on the surface, but after pulling back the threads, they will find some inevitability lurking behind the seeming coincidence [8]. Without nearly 20,000 stores, Mixue's commercial song would not have been able to reinforce the brainwashing effect by playing the theme song repeatedly, laying the foundation for widespread online distribution. Therefore, other tea beverage brands cannot copy Mixue's brand marketing strategy but should combine their conditions and develop their brand marketing strategy.

4. Conclusion

With the industrial transformation and consumer upgrading, the domestic tea beverage industry broke through the traditional restrictions and ushered in a new style of tea drinking [9]. Mixue can stand out among other tea brands of the same type, not only because of its own high quality and low price, its high-cost performance, and the number of stores and locations but also because of its successful branding. Mixue shows obvious uniqueness from other similar tea brands in the process of brand shaping and communication, based on the lively and lovely Snow King IP image, launching an impressive theme song and music video with the advantage of new media communication, plus increasing mass participation and emotional marketing for the festival. The brand influence of Mixue has provided a new direction for the development of tea beverage brands, which have taken a place in the minds of consumers through a series of communication and marketing activities to convey the brand image and brand meaning of Mixue[10]. It not only makes the relationship between the brand and consumers closer but also makes the brand deeply remembered by the target users and enhances consumer loyalty. Of course, under the rolling tide of the times, Mixue should not be satisfied with the present and should continue to combine their conditions to carry out brand marketing that suits them.

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